has affected very badly due to delay in the implementation of the International Airport Project at Devanahalli, near Bangalore;

(b) when the foundation stone for the proposed project was laid by the Hon'ble Prime Minister;

(c) what are the reasons for delay in granting statutory clearances to the proposed project;

(d) whether Government are aware that the consortium could not go ahead with the proposed project due to delay in giving statutory clearances; and

(e) the steps Government propose to take to give statutory clearances early?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (e) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Disinvestment Plans of IA and AI

642. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have finally decided to abandon its disinvestment plans for Indian Airlines and Air India in order to facilitate the acquisition of aircraft for fleet modernisation; and

(b) if so, what are the modernisation plan for the two airlines and time-frame for its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) The matter is under consideration of the Government.

(b) Acquisition of aircraft for Air India and Indian Airlines would be taken up after a decision is taken in the matter of disinvestment.

Expansion of AI network

643. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal for the expansion of Air India network;

(b) if so, the steps taken in that regard during last three years; and

(c) what are the details of additional domestic and International Flights proposed to be introduced by Air India during 2003-04?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) Air India has plans to acquire new aircraft both in the long range and short range category in order to phase out the older aircrafts, rationalise its fleet and expand capacity. The proposal is yet to be received in the Ministry for Government approval.

To meet short-term capacity requirements, Air India has increased its capacity through dry leasing of 9 A310 and one B747. Air India has commenced operations to New Jersey and Frankfurt from December, 2002 in a phased manner.

(c) Air India has introduced numerous Hub and spoke flights with its own aircraft as well as Indian Airlines aircraft which offers seamless connections to/from the Gulf, Europe and the USA. Air India has restructured its summer schedule with effect from April 2003 and has increased flights to the Gulf with standardised departure timings.

Renovation of Airports in Bihar

†644. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under consideration for renovation and expansion of airports in Bihar;

(b) if so, whether any amount has been spent on the same so far; if so, the amount so spent and present status of each work; and

(c) the steps taken so far for setting up new airports in the country and State-wise details thereof?

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.